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PRESS RELEASE

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Four Charged in Drug Conspiracy, Accused of Distributing Cocaine in Washington Area - Nearly 30 Kilograms of Cocaine, Firearms, Seized in Searches -

WASHINGTON - Four men have been indicted on federal charges stemming from an ongoing investigation into a drug trafficking organization that distributed large amounts of cocaine in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The investigation led to the recent seizure of nearly 30 kilograms of cocaine, with an estimated wholesale value of about \$1 million.

The indictments were announced today by U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr., James W. McJunkin, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office, and Cathy L. Lanier, Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD).

The charges followed searches and arrests on April 26, 2011, in which authorities seized 29.5 kilograms of cocaine, approximately \$500,000 in cash, a Bushmaster AR-15 assault rifle, two semiautomatic pistols, and two bullet-resistant vests. The seizure of cocaine, recovered from a storage locker in Maryland, is one of the largest recent drug seizures in the area.

The four defendants include: Gezo Edwards, 37, of Silver Spring, Md.; William M. Bowman, 31, of Bowie, Md.; Robert Carl Richards, 35, of Seat Pleasant, Md., and Willie Moorer, 37, of Washington, D.C. All have been in custody since their arrests.

The men were indicted April 28, 2011 by a grand jury in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on a charge of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine. The indictment also includes a forfeiture count seeking all proceeds from the crimes. If convicted, the defendants face a minimum of ten years and a maximum of life in prison.

"These arrests and seizures have disrupted and dismantled a major cocaine trafficking operation that aimed to fill our neighborhoods with dangerous narcotics," said U.S. Attorney Machen. "Our raids resulted in the seizure of 30 kilograms of cocaine, a half-million dollars, and dangerous firearms. With those drugs and guns off the streets, D.C. is a safer city today."

“Our investigators are finding ever increasing sophistication and creativity by drug dealers to ply their trade and conceal their illegal actions,” said Assistant Director McJunkin. “Here we found use of a mobile drug processing business and money hidden in secret compartments. These arrests, however, show that the combined efforts of our law enforcement partnerships will be there, tracking their movement and stopping them; specifically here the FBI Special Agents from the Washington and Baltimore field offices and officers from MPD, Prince George’s and Montgomery County.”

The charges arose from a 15-month investigation by the FBI and MPD into people suspected of acting as wholesale distributors of cocaine in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The investigation determined that from 2008, Edwards, Bowman, Richards and Moorner maintained a drug trafficking organization that supplied distribution amounts of cocaine, and crack cocaine to drug dealers in the District of Columbia and Maryland.

In April 2011, investigators learned that the defendants had arranged for a large shipment of cocaine to the area, and that they were storing it in a storage facility in Hyattsville, Md. After obtaining a search warrant, agents searched the locker and recovered almost 30 kilograms of cocaine, packaging material and firearms, including an assault rifle. The defendants were placed under arrest when they attempted to return to the storage facility.

Subsequent searches of the defendants’ residences resulted in the seizure of approximately \$500,000 in cash.

All four defendants pled not guilty in a court appearance last week. An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of criminal law and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.

The prosecution grew out of the efforts of the federal Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, a multi-agency team that conducts comprehensive, multi-level attacks on major drug trafficking and money laundering organizations. The principal mission of the nationwide program is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle the most serious drug trafficking and money laundering organizations and those primarily responsible for the nation’s drug supply.

In recent years, investigations by this task force have led to the arrests and indictments of dozens of people from drug organizations that operate in the Washington, D.C. area.

In announcing the indictments, U.S. Attorney Machen, Assistant Director McJunkin and Chief Lanier commended the work of the FBI and MPD members of the task force who investigated the case. They also thanked the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Maryland, which provided assistance. Finally they cited the efforts of those who worked on the case from the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia, including Assistant U.S. Attorneys Debra Long-Doyle and Steven B. Wasserman.